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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 ACDA-07 NEAE-00 /079 W
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P R 281000Z JUN 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4401
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3047

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PBOR SOPN LE XF
SUBJ: KFUR FRONT DECLARATION AGAIN CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT

REF: BEIRUT 2620

1. SUMMARY: CHRISTIAN "LEBANESE FRONT" LEADERS HAVE ISSUED NEW DECLARATION WHICH TAKES GOVERNMENT MORE STRONGLY TO TASK THAN HERETOFORE. DECLARATION RENEWS DENUNCIATION OF CAIRO ACCORD, AGAIN CRITICIZES ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON, IMPLIES THAT ASF IS GOING BEYOND ITS MISSION IN LEBANON AND CALLS FOR LIMITATION OF CENSORSHIP. FRONT SAYS THAT NO TALK OF "CONFEDERATION" OF LEBANON WITH OTHER STATES IS POSSIBLE AS LONG AS ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON CONTINUES, AND AGAIN IMPLIES POSSIBILITY OF APPEAL BEYOND ARAB WORLD. FRONT SAYS GRAVE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON COULD EFFECT FUTURE OF ALL OF LEBANON, CALLS IT AN ARAB
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RESPONSIBILITY, AND THREATENS TO "RECONSIDER" LEBANON'S DEPENDENCE ON THE ARAB LEAGUE. GOL ATTEMPTED TO TOTALLY CENSOR PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT IN LOCAL PRESS, BUT IT WAS BROADCAST ON RADIO AND TWO NEWSPAPERS HAVE ALREADY VIOLATED PROHIBITION. OTHER PRESS COVERAGE IS CONFUSED. SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS SUGGEST DISSENSION WITHIN FRONT CONCERNING STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOLLOWING MEETING OF "LEBANESE FRONT" LEADERSHIP JUNE 24 (PRIOR TO DEPARTURE OF PIERRE GEMAYEL FOR SAUDI ARABIA), EDOUARD HONEIN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE LEBANESE FRONT "DIRECTORY," HELD PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 25 TO ISSUE FRONT COMMUNIQUE ON CURRENT LEBANESE SITUATION. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM VERSION PUBLISHED IN FRENCH LANGUAGE LE REVEIL JUNE 26:

A. THE CAIRO ACCORD IS DEFUNCT, SINCE IT HAS NOT BEEN EXECUTED AS CALLED FOR BY RESOLUTIONS OF ARAB SUMMIT OF OCTOBER 1976. (THIS IS REPETITION OF EARLIER DENUNCIATION OF ACCORD; SEE REFTEL.)

B. ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON, "ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF THE CONFRONTATION" IN LEBANON, HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED DESPITE REPEATED CALLS BY THE FRONT.

C. "(THE FRONT) HAS POINTED OUT WHAT COULD BE THE SIGNIFI-CANCE OF CERTAIN ABNORMAL INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN VARIOUS PLACES IN THE COUNTRY, HOPING THAT THE ARAB INITIATIVE DOES NOT DEVIATE FROM THE ESSENCE OF ITS MISSION..." (THIS IS A THINLY VEILED CRITICISM OF ASF OPERATIONS IN CHRISTIAN AREAS.)

D. CENSORSHIP MUST BE "RECONSIDERED...SO THAT (IT) REMAINS WITHIN THE LIMITS WHICH MOTIVATED ITS ESTABLISHMENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

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DOES NOT EXCEED THE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH IT OPERATES SO AS TO NOT AFFECT FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE, OF OPINION AND OF EXPRES-SION, WHILE LOOKING FORWARD TO ITS COMPLETE ABOLITION."

E. LEBANON "DOES NOT HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN FEDERATIONS... (THE FRONT) POINTS OUT THAT ANY DECISION COMMITTING THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS DESTINY REQUIRES THE UNANIMOUS EXPRESSION OF THE LEBANESE NATIONAL WILL, WITHOUT COERCION OR SUSPICION...(THE LEBANESE) REFUSE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES ON THIS SUBJECT AS LONG AS THE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE CON-TINUES IN LEBANON."

F. "WHILE HONORING ITS ATTACHMENT TO ITS (LOCAL, OR REGIONAL) MILIEU AND BEING DETERMINED TO STRENGTHEN IT, LEBANON RESPECTS ITS AFFILIATION WITH A LARGER WORLD...(LEBANON) BELIEVES THAT ITS DESTINY DEPENDS ON THIS AFFILIATION AS MUCH AS ITS ATTACHMENT TO ITS (REGIONAL) MILIEU."

G. "THE PERSISTENCE OF INCIDENTS IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHICH COULD HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE OF LEBANON...IS DUE TO ACTS OF THE ARMED PALESTINIAN ORGANIZA-TIONS, WHICH DO NOT CONFORM WITH THE CLAUSES OF THE CAIRO

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ACCORD...CONSEQUENTLY, THE LEBANESE FRONT HOLDS THE PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE ARAB STATES (WHICH SIGNED THE ACCORD ON TWO OCCASIONS, AT RIYADH AND AT CAIRO) RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION ON LEBANESE TERRITORY, PARTICULARLY IN SOUTH LEBANON...ABOVE ALL IF THIS EVOLUTION PROVOKES THE OCCUPATION OF ANY PARCEL OF THE LEBANESE FATHERLAND."

H. "FACED WITH THE SILENCE OF THE ARAB STATES IN THIS REGARD--IN PARTICULAR CONCERNING THE CAIRO ACCORD AND THE MEANS OF ITS EXECUTION--THE LEBANESE FRONT WILL BE FORCED TO RECONSIDER ITS RECOURSE TO THE ARAB LEAGUE, TO SECURE THE SETTLEMENT OF ITS PROBLEMS ARISING FOR THE MOST PART FROM THE INVOLVEMENT OF SOME OF THESE COUNTRIES IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS."
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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3047

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

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3. GOL REACTION. GOL CENSORS FORBADE PUBLICATION OF ANY PART OF THE STATEMENT. IN AN UNUSUAL DEPARTURE, L'ORIENT-LE JOUR JUNE 26 FEATURES LARGE BLANK SPACE ON PAGE TWO WHERE TEXT PRESUMABLY WAS ORIGINALLY INSERTED. HOWEVER, TWO NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED TEXT ANYWAY: LIWA, AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER EDITED BY A MOSLEM, THE EVENING OF JUNE 25, AND LE REVEIL, CLOSE TO PHALANGE AND NLP ON JUNE 26 THE PRESS ANNOUNCED THAT, AS A PENALTY, LE REVEIL WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED ON JUNE 27 BUT WILL RESUME PUBLICATION ON JUNE 28.

4. CONFUSED PRESS TREATMENT OF STORY. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR JUNE 26 CARRIED LEAD STORY WHICH MENTIONED STATEMENT IN PASSING BUT ADDRESSED ITSELF PRIMARILY TO A CALL BY CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND HIS SON DANY ON PRESIDENT SARKIS AFTERNOON OF JUNE 25. ABOUT TEN LINES OF AN EDITORIAL BY AMINE ABOU-KHALED CONFIDENTIAL

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WERE LIKEWISE CENSORED OUT. L'ORIENT JUNE 27 REPORTS THAT THE FRONT WILL HAVE ANOTHER MEETING JUNE 29 AT WHICH ONE OF THE (UNSPECIFIED) PARTIES OF THE LEBANESE FRONT WILL DEMAND ONCE AGAIN THE PUBLICATION OF THE ENTIRE TEXT OF THE STATE-MENT, "EVEN IF IT WOULD LEAD TO A CONFRONTATION WITH THE AUTHORITIES," AND ADDS THAT ONE OF THE LEBANESE FRONT PARTIES "HAS BEEN FOR SOME TIME SEARCHING FOR A PRETEXT TO SHIFT THE (LEBANESE) FRONT FROM THE LOYALIST CAMP TO THAT OF THE OPPOSITION..."

5. INTERNAL LEBANESE FRONT POLITICS UNCLEAR. IT SEEMS EXTRA-ORDINARY THAT THE FRONT WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, IS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE, ON THE SAME DAY THAT PIERRE GEMAYEL DEPARTED TO VISIT SAUDI ARABIA. AN NAHAR JUNE 27 SAID THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAD SUGGESTED THAT PUBLICATION OF THE STATEMENT BE POSTPONED UNTIL THE RETURN OF FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS FROM HIS TOUR OF ARAB COUNTRIES EXPECTED THIS WEEK. AN NAHAR SAYS THE "HAWKS" OF THE FRONT HOWEVER WANTED THE STATEMENT ISSUED IMMEDIATELY. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR LIKEWISE REFERS TO "HAWKS AND DOVES."

6. COMMENT: CHRISTIAN "LEBANESE FRONT" HAS IN EFFECT ISSUED ANOTHER CHALLENGE TO AUTHORITY OF SARKIS GOVERNMENT, FOLLOWING ITS DENUNCIATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD JUST THREE WEEKS AGO. INTENT MAY BE TO STEAL THE THUNDER FROM THE GOVERNMENT JUST AS IT IS BEGINNING TO MOVE TOWARDS A COMPROMISE UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PALESTINIANS ON APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD AND ON A PEACEFUL MODUS VIVENDI IN THE SOUTH. IT IS POSSIBLE ALSO THAT THE KFUR FRONT THINKS THE ISRAELIS ARE UP TO SOMETHING IN THE SOUTH, AND WANTS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IT WILL HOLD THE ARAB STATES RESPONSIBLE SHOULD SUCH COME TO PAST, AND, AT THE SAME TIME, DISTANCE ITSELF FROM THE ISRAELIS, WITH WHOM SOME KFUR ELEMENTS HAVE LATELY BECOME UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSELY

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